The Silent Answer

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The Silent Answer

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Summary

Falling into the sea was not on the list of how Hannibal thought his life would start after his newfound freedom.
Nor was holding long, one-sided, conversations with Will.

He was usually considered a very patient man but the silence he had to confront every day since The Fall was starting to get on his nerves.
Now, he would give the world for a simple word from Will.
Even one of rejection.
It would still be better than to only have his own thoughts to answer to.

Meanwhile he still had to take care of the silent empath and to help him into their new life.

Notes

Hi Peeps!
Welcome to my first fic ever!
I wanted to write something related to Hannibal for a long time now but never crossed the line before. (Having difficulties with expressing myself in english and all.)
I finally decided to put some of my thoughts together and wriote this little thing here!

You can find me on tumblr>, through the content is more drawing than writting at the moment.

I hope you will enjoy this fic my dear Peeps!
Love y'all!

See the end of the work for more notes

Un début en chute libre

Wind.

That’s all Hannibal could hear.

Wind, hurling by his ears.

Of course he, was aware that the deafening sound of it was surely more due to his submission to gravity than potential bad weather. Even though he was trying, he could not hear anything else besides the wind.

Not the sound of waves crashing into the cliff side underneath him. Not the frightened sound coming from Will, despite the other’s head being tucked into his shoulder. Not their ragged breaths, due to what they just endured.

No.

All he could hear was the wind as they plummeted towards the ocean. While he might not be able to hear him, he could feel Will against him. He could feel the sputtering breath on his neck and the heart beating against his own chest.

When he felt the slow but firm push of Will’s body against his, the push from firm ground to void, he followed it with no resistance. He braced himself, both mentally and physically, in anticipation of the impact he knew would come, embracing the body close to him, savouring the rare but, oh, awaited contact between them for a short moment. Acting in accord with gravity’s help, he turned their bodies in order to spare Will as best as he could from the pain when they will, inevitably, hit the water.

And hit the water they did.

Cold, glaring pain and disoriented was all Hannibal could feel when they entered the fluid, dark, mass of the ocean.

Recovering from the shock after a few seconds, Hannibal reassured his grip on Will and start swimming in what, he hoped, was the direction to the surface. He soon realized, after a short

struggling moment, that Will didn't seem to be swimming. Or moving.

At all.

Only his years as a surgeon in E.R. let him push back the rush of panic that flared in his veins to the back of his mind. He didn't have time to reflect on what the stillness of Will could mean. No.

The priority was to bring them both back to a more breathable and solid place. To safety. His panicked thoughts could wait a little longer.

Tightening his hold, more than ever, on his seemingly unconscious companion, Hannibal started to push through the water.

With more difficulty than he cared to admit, due to his newly acquired wounds and the dead weight that was Will at the moment, he finally reached the surface. Breaking through the water, gulping for air the best he could, he tried to not let his panic reign over his mind when he didn't hear or feel a similar intake of air from Will. Adjusting the unconscious man position so he was on the doctor's good side, the one which wasn't currently bleeding, he dragged them both towards the nearest shore as quickly as he could, fighting through pain, tiredness and water.

He could only be thankful that, in their plunge, they managed to escape the rocks that jutted from the water. Dangerously sharp and certain to kill anyone whom could have the unfortunate idea to fall on them. Passing through the barrier of rocks was hard enough as it was without a broken limb, or spine.

Finally reaching his destination, he pushed Will on the shore so that he was now laying down on his back on the cold and unwelcoming ground. Away from the unforgiving water.

Taking a short time to breathe, Hannibal crawled to lay on the side next to his companion.

Putting an arm under himself, he reached Will's face with the other.

Cold to the touch, which was expected after a midnight tumble in the ocean, Will appeared pale under the bright moonlight. His usually pink lips now seemingly tinted blue and veins

appearing under the translucent skin. Moving his hand from the non-injured side of Will's face to his nose and mouth, Hannibal tried, hoped, to feel an exhalation from Will, slight as it might be.

None came.

Quickly rising to his knees, hovering over Will's prone form, he placed his hands on the still chest and started pushing in a regular and familiar rhythm. Interrupting his pushes to breathe into the slack mouth under his, he tried to concentrate on his movements, to ignore his panic coming back with more force than before. Decidedly not letting his thoughts lingered on "what if" filled with a cold and motionless Will Graham, Hannibal pushed and breathe away.

The thing he couldn't ignore was the time slowly passing but still rushing by.

The seconds ticking away, from present to past, taking with them the only being that Hannibal cared to care about in the whole world. Seconds that were slowly dragging the smaller man into the dark and irresistible dance of death.

At this thought Hannibal couldn't stop a tear from slipping, escaping his eye down to his jaw and landing on his now slightly trembling hands. Hands that were still pushing against an immobile chest.

"Please Will. Do not go where I can't join you."

His own hushed voice sounded like thunder to his ears. The man laying on the dirt answered him with silence. Feeling his hope fleeting away with each passing moment, he tried again.

"Please Will. Breathe".

As if compelling to Hannibal's pleading, a suddent cough followed by an intake of air finally broke the deafening silence that seemed to surround them. Will was breathing.

Relief.

Pure, oblivious, exquisite relief, washed over Hannibal. Pushing Will on his side to help him clear his airways from lingering water, he couldn't retain a small sound of joy, slowly moving his hand up and down the other's back.

Reassured by the now regular movements of Will's chest, interrupted only by a few coughs there and there, Hannibal laid on his back for a minute. Calming his own breathing to a more regular rhythm and closing his eyes, he listened to the sound of the slow breaths from the man beside him.

The sound of Will breathing. No longer utterly and deadly still.

Hannibal knew that they didn't have much time before they had to move on. Jack would not take long to realize that the vehicle that was supposedly transporting the Chesapeake Ripper and his cunning special agent went missing, if he hadn't already.

It would not be hard for him to follow their tracks from the abandoned vehicles to the house on the cliff. Not speaking of the corpses that the three murderers let behind on their path which would be a clear indicator of what happened.

Hannibal smiled diligently at the thought of finally being able to call Will a murderer.

Even if he killed before, he only admitted to the beauty of it when the Great Red Dragon went defeated. How delicious it has been to witness, after so much time of the empath holding back from his dark desires, his submission to his own shadows. Starting the process of his final transformation.

His transition was not over. Not yet. Hannibal was aware of it. While Will killed another being, for the Dragon could not be called man, and admitted the beauty of it, he still had to embrace and recognize the beauty of his dark and complex soul in the light of day, where he could not hide his shadow beneath those of the night.

But this was not the moment to linger on those thoughts. They already lost a lot of time with their unscripted bath. They had to move on.

Hannibal needed to focus on the present time and let daydreaming about possibilities for another hour. He had to plan *their* next move. Yes, despite Will being unconscious and not showing any signs of waking up in the next hours or so, Hannibal could not help but to think of their actions as one, the doing of one single and dangerous being.

For when, bathing in its own bloody wings, the Great Red Dragon gave his finale breath, it marked the moment Will and Hannibal entwined their souls into one.

Pulling himself from those savoury thoughts, Hannibal start listing what they'll need to do. The first thing was to tend to both of their injuries and lead them towards a more discrete place where they could rest and see to their wounds without worrying about the FBI following their every move.

Thankfully he had several places that weren't traceable to his name, one of them being a few hours drive from where they were at the moment.

Then, they will need to discuss their new situation. While Hannibal truly hoped that Will pushing the both of them into the sea after killing Dolarhyde meant he, too, was willing to start a life with the doctor, he preferred to talk about it. To make sure that Will's wishes for them were accounted in their new life. After all, if they decided to go in the same direction they will both be holding the wheel.

He couldn't predict with precision what their life will be made of from now. Better focus on what to do now so they will have all the time and resources to decide on how to act together in the near future.

Looking around them Hannibal could see they ended near the path that leaded to the house. The path was too narrow for him to drive the car down to the shore, he would need to carry Will up to the hideout. From what he could see and feel in the obscurity surrounding them, he will need to stitch his abdomen and back, both torn from where the bullet entered and left his body.

His wounds were still bleeding but it was more feeble now, it didn't seem that any major organs had been pierced during the fight.

Right now his principal concern was Will. While his injuries didn't seem to be deadly they still needed to be taken care of and the man, while steadily breathing now, was still unresponsive.

He could perfectly picture in his mind the way Will had pulled the knife from his own cheek and attacked the Great Red Dragon with it, barred teeth and a murderous glint in his eyes. The image of danger itself, of darkness. It had sent chills down Hannibal's spine at the sight of it.

Glancing back at the prone form of his companion on the ground, he felt a rush of protectiveness and adoration coursed through his veins. He only felt this way for two persons during his life, and one of them died many years ago.

Picking up Will and rising to his feet, holding the man close to his chest in a similar way to the one they escaped Meerkat farm, he started walking. Slowly, step by step, careful about the way he was carrying Will, disturbing him the less he could, Hannibal climbed up the path.

They finally reached the house. Hannibal sat Will on the ground, leaning him against the wall so he could reach for the hidden key and open the door.

Flicking the light on, he carefully carried Will to the couch in the spacious living room. He laid him down, placing a pillow under his head and went hurriedly in search for the aid-kit.

Entering the bathroom, blinking from the harsh neon light, he grabbed the aid-kit from under the sink and sat on the bathtub. Pulling his shirt off, he poked around the bleeding hole on his side. Gritting his teeth and ignoring the pain as mush as he could, he started to clean the wound, then pulled a thread through his flesh and sew it back together. He dressed the injury on his back in a simpler way, unable to reached it easily, it shall suffice until he found a way to get a better look at it.

Taking the aid-kit with him, he went hurriedly towards the living room where, unsurprisingly, Will was still in the position he left him in.

First, he took care of Will's collarbone, the bleeding wound was deep enough to need stitches. He then tended to the torn cheek, Will wouldn't be able to talk or eat comfortably for several weeks by the look of it. Dressing it up with attention he then let himself comfortably fall back on his knees, sitting on his heels. He gazed at Will, softly caressing the uninjured side of his face, swiping his thumb from the ark of the lean nose to his temple. Tenderly, he slipped his fingers in the dark curls, still wet from the salted water. His eyes roamed upon the face of the dark haired man. He looked peaceful like this. His usual stern expression was gone, left in the turmoils that happened under the moon. He almost looked like he was calmly resting, unworried about the unsure future that was ahead of them.

Hannibal, still kneeling at the couch's side, leaned his head towards Will. Softly resting his forehead upon the other's. Closing his eyes, he breathed into Will's scent. Forefront he could smell the awful aftershave lotion, the one with a boat on the bottle. The one he would have put in its rightful place a long time ago if he could have done so: the trash can. Hopefully that retched smell had been partly washed away by the sea. Now the principal fragrance was Will's own scent. A reminiscence of open space, fresh air, pines. The smell of the river side he knew the man enjoyed so much. There was also a hint of dog present in it, the four legged creatures never far away from the dark haired man. What disturbed Hannibal in his peaceful examination, clinging to the warm skin underneath his, was a sweet flowery scent. Will's wife.

Lifting his head with a slight sneer upon his lips, Hannibal turned his head with a sigh, fixing the opposite wall in order to push down the rise of anger he could sense in his chest.

The thought of Will's life during those last three years was still a sensitive subject for him. The idea of the empath spending time willingly with someone whom wasn't Hannibal, marrying them and raising a child with them irked him more than he let on. Though sending the Dragon after what he considered intruders into Will's life might have clued how angry he was at the subject. He still had difficulties to swallow the fact that Will went and started a new life without him while he, himself, was stuck behind bars. Well, a glass wall truly, but still, imprisoned.

And how sweet it was to taste liberty. Made even better by the fact that it had been offered on a silver plate by Will himself.

Yes, despite the man choosing to find wife and child and the failed attempt at killing them, Hannibal still felt hope at the idea that the ex special agent went to the doctor on his own and that he had such an important role in his newfound freedom.

Getting back on his feet, Hannibal start packing for their upcoming departure from the hideout. The aid-kit went first, there was no doubt that they would need it quite often for an undetermined span of time. He then went to the bedroom, the master bedroom. Spacious, decorated in a simple yet elegant way with blue tones on the walls and a light grey floor. At its center was a large bed, big enough for two persons to lay comfortably side by side. It held the whispers of a possible life, long lost by now.

Tearing his eyes from the bed, Hannibal went to the chest, opening a drawer full of clothes he bought years ago in anticipation of their escape after Jack's murder. If the bed was holding whispers of lost hopes, those clothes were burning souvenirs of the fateful evening that saw Hannibal's precious cup breaking apart. Some could say that he was the one to let the cup fall on the floor as he cut Abigail's throat. He still was convinced that it was Will whom forced his hand to let go of the cup by betraying them at the last minute. He let the cup broke if only to see Will's heart bleed over it.

Taking two piles of clothes, men clothes, simple and elegant, perfect for two people wishing to be unseen amongst others, he closed the drawer. Letting behind the small bundle of women clothes in the chest as he had let go of their adoptive daughter years ago. It was now the perfect time to let go of the past and to seek a new and brighter future with, he hoped, Will at his side.

Coming back to the living room with the clothes, he finished packing, adding fake papers, toiletries and some canned food, hoping he would be able to buy fresh ingredients before he had to open any of them,

Grabbing the keys for the car that was waiting outside for them, as untraceable to his name as were the houses, he put their bag into the trunk of it. After placing Will delicately into the passenger seat and sitting himself in the driver seat, he closed the door of the car. He started the ignition and, despite his exhaustion that was slowly growing, he put his hands on the wheel and start driving to their next destination.

To their new life.

To be continued.

Aurore d'une vie

Chapter Summary

After rescuing Will and himself, Hannibal drive them to a safe house where they will start their new life. Hannibal take great care of Will and consider Jack Crawford search for them.

Chapter Notes

Hey Peeps!
Welcome to the second chapter of this story!
If you're here it means you read and enjoy the first chapter well enough to keep on reading, thanks for that!

I hope you will enjoy this one as well!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It had been two days since they arrived at the house they were now residing at. Two days filled with anxiety and silence. Anxiety from Hannibal, due to Will's persistent silence. The empath had not woken up from their plunge in the sea yet. The doctor had looked all over him, checking his head, neck and back, but he had not detected any damages other than the one made by Dolarhyde and his knife, no wound that could clearly explained the state Will was currently in.

He could only suppose that the shock of their enter in the water had been more forceful to the smaller man than he had initially realized, despite his efforts to take most of the impact. But, shock or not, Will ought to have been awake by now. If he had a mild concussion, it was not a good sign that he hadn't shown the slightest sign of regaining consciousness yet. Not even a twitch of fingers or a pinch of eyebrows had perturbed the immobility of the man. The only proof that he was, indeed, alive, was the slow rise and down of his chest. Well, he was no longer pale as death, thought Hannibal, but still, he was not yet the image of good health. His face holding a hint of paleness, only aggravated by the profound dark circles under his eyes. Even if Hannibal had already seen such things on Will's face by the past, this time he couldn't look into the storming blue eyes to reassure himself of the well-being of the man.

While he had plenty of medical supplies at hand, enough to take proper care of their injuries and more, he didn't have access to more complex medical instruments that could help him

evaluate the state of Will, that could help him explain what was currently happening to the man. His sense of smell could only get him so far, useful when he had to detect a concealed illness, as he had proven it with Bella, or when he had to catch a hidden infection before it could spread. But neither his hands nor his nose had found something irregular in Will's case, despite his apparent deny of consciousness.

The doctor could only guess and hope about the near future. He hated to have to relay on guesses and hopes. Not when Will's health depended on it. Sure, by the past he had played with it, the whole encephalitis episode was poof enough of it. But, by then, he had full knowledge of what was going on, having detect the inflammation at its earlier stage. He also had a good perception of what were the limits of the man's endurance, how much he could take before breaking apart, how much Hannibal could inflict upon him before he would be defeated by the illness. How much the doctor could influence him into submitting to his dark wishes, aided by the sweet flavoured fever clinging to the ill brain.

Yes, he had drawn the limits of the empath and had played around them with great pleasure and a steeled hand.

Now, the situation was different, in many ways.

First, he was completely in the dark concerning Will's current capacity to overcome this new obstacle, this unknown and uncertain obstacle. Second, he now cared for the man more than he did before. Or, at least, more than he knew he did, at the time. He had come upon this realization during both of their imprisonments. First missing Will when the man had been under Frederick's care, thinking, at the time, that he only missed their conversations and the dangerous game laying within those, not according the emptiness he had felt in his chest to the man himself but to what he represented: an interesting distraction. Yes, he had entertained the idea of Will growing into his potential, into the dark dangerous being Hannibal sensed within the man. But he thought it was nothing more than a game, one more elevated than those he had played with previous patients, yes, but a game nonetheless.

He had to admit how wrong he had been when he had found himself in a cell, detained, away from his life and its pleasures. When, sitting underneath sharp lights behind the glass wall, he had wandered around in his mind, he had found himself always coming back to the empath in a way or another. His mind replacing the greatest figures of art with Will's profile, imagining how the man would enjoy the recipes he navigated through. His imagination taking him to the places he had visited by the past, only for him to wish that he could share them with the empath. It was within the walls of the Baltimore State Hospital that he realized the subject of his heart's wishes was no longer freedom by itself, but a life at Will's side. His freedom being given to him by the same man that occupied his every thoughts only making the whole thing more delicious than he had dared to envisage inside his long thoughtful sessions within his mind.

And, now, he didn't know what was happening to Will.

He hated it. He hated that he had not the smallest idea of what was to happen to the unconscious man outside of his own hopes and speculations. He hated to see him so still, used as he was to the continuous flow of movements that the man was normally subject to. From the nervous twitch of his hands, his fleeting glances during conversations, to the way he paced across the doctor's office when said conversations weren't going the way he would like them to do. But, more than the incertitude, more that the stillness, what Hannibal hated the most was the silence Will was currently plunged in.

Hannibal was as familiar with Will's gestures as he was with his silence. Often present in their conversations while the special agent carefully chose his words, constructing a whole dimension within them. Silence, when he was attentively contemplating the psychiatrist own words, appreciating their meaning and the beauty in it. It was in Will's very nature to be silent, to better listen to his mind's roaring whispers.

So, yes, the good doctor was used to the man's silence.

It was not like the one he was currently confronted to.

This silence was empty of meaning, empty of emotions, empty of underlaying tension and understanding.

Empty of Will's soul.

To say that Hannibal didn't enjoy the situation would have been a sweet euphemism. When, in the days after Will came up with the idea of a failed transfer, he had dared envisage the days after his possible escape, after his reunion with freedom and with Will, he had not, for one second imagined that it would be possible for him to be at the man's side and to still feel so alone. More than ever.

He had pictured the man leaving him behind, regretting his choices and responsibility in the Dragon's fall, wanting nothing to do with the cannibal, refusing to stay with him one more moment. But, in his imagination, the refusal was always filled with anger and loud words. Not this passive silence that Will was unwillingly imposing on both of them.

During the two days since he had driven them here, he had barely left Will's side despite his own pain and tiredness. Separating himself from the man only for a couple of hours, needing to take care of his own wounds and to make use of the bathroom and kitchen. He had taken to spend his time sitting in a comfortable chair nearby the bed he had carefully tucked Will in.

To occupy the slowly passing hours he had tried to read, taking a book from the shelves that were covering one of the bedroom's walls. Though he had many subjects to choose from, to

let his mind wandered to, it was for nothing. After a handful of trials he resolved himself to stare at Will as silently as the man was, trying to get a grip on his emotions.

While he had been able to ignore his panic when rescuing Will from the sea and driving them here, he was now constantly consumed by it. Feeling it flaring in his chest at the mere thought of Will not waking up. Feeling it pressing against his temples when he felt a small twitch of the fingers he held on, only to realize it had been the work of his imagination. Feeling it crushing his heart at the fact that he was responsible for Will's current state.

Hannibal was not familiar with guilt. The emotion rarely showing up in him. And when it did, he usually detached himself from it easily. But, during the long hours he spent staring at Will, he could not suppress the guilt that had started to make a home of his chest.

He should have been able to protect Will from the unforgiving dive into the water. Or, better yet, he should have been able to stop them from tumbling from the high ground in the first place. As beautiful as the embrace under the moonlight had been, he could only feel resentment at what happened right after.

Shaking himself from this peculiar trail of thoughts, he glanced back at Will's prone form. At least, he thought, he had managed to avoid any infection settling in his wounds. Tending to the tender skin of the man had been a respite from his rummaging ideas. Focusing on the familiar movements as he cleaned and dressed the abused flesh had helped him gain some control over his anger at himself and their present situation.

His own wounds were going well, too. While he still fought hisses of pain when moving around the house, he estimated that, in a short few weeks, he should have regain most of his mobility and ability to move without any major difficulties.

For now, he ignored the pain with gritting teeth and stiff movements while he tended to Will. Speaking of which, he stood up and started towards the kitchen in order to prepare lunch for both of them.

Once in the kitchen, he opened a can of soup, emptying it with a slight disgusted sneer into a pot he had put on the stove. He leaned against the counter, waiting for it to heat up. His eyes fell back on the nearly empty stock of food supplies he had brought with them from the first house. Well, Hannibal couldn't call it food, really. Just a bunch of canned nutriments that were useful for the time he recuperated some strength. Nothing that deserves the rightful title of food in his eyes. For the first time since they came up here he considered the idea of leaving Will alone in the house for a couple of hours in order to go and buy some groceries. As unpleasant the notion of leaving Will was, unable to defend himself, vulnerable, or to not be at his sides in case he woke up, he needed to go out. Comforting himself with the recipes flashing through his mind, the ones he would be able to cook for the man once he had more and fresher ingredients to work with. Glaring back at the steaming pot and its contents, he

took his decision. A trip to the city was necessary if he wished to feed savoury meals to Will if he woke up. When he woke up.

He had to wake up.

Turning off the stove, he poured its content in two bowls before placing them on a tray, bringing it up to bedroom he had left minutes ago. Pausing at the door, he took a moment to look at Will whom still hadn't move at all while the doctor was away preparing their food. Not that said doctor had expected him to do so. Silently approaching the bed, he sank back into the chair and placed the tray on the bedside table. He slowly fed spoons of soup to Will, careful to not spill any of the liquid. His task done, he grabbed his own bowl portion and start eating it, blocking the taste of it the best he could. Finished with his unsavoury lunch, He put the bowl back on the tray and leaned more comfortably into the chair, letting his eyes found Will's face then falling to his own hands, crossed on his knees.

"I will head out for a few hours this afternoon, Will. We need some groceries, our food supplies are steadily growing low. Not that we had a lot of it to start with. I admit, my dear boy, that I wasn't very keen on the idea of feeding us conditioned food. You know of my tastes. My hope was that we could have shared a real meal by now. Together."

Pausing, he glanced back at Will.

"Well, he continued, It's just a small delay until the occasion arises. I'm sure we will be able to feast upon good food soon enough." He let a small moment passed by, contemplating on what he would say next.

"I would even agree to let aside my preferred kind of meat away from the dishes if you asked me to. I would agree to many things if you were the one asking them, Will. You only need to ask them. You only need to wake up and make your demands so I shall submit to them."

It was not often that Hannibal let his emotions directed his words so freely. He tended to guard his heart better than that, not letting his guard down easily. Will, once again, was source of exceptions and sentiments within the doctor. His words were met with none coming from the man next to him. It only aggravated the continuous pain residing in the cannibal's chest.

Standing up, with a last glance at Will, he left the room, then the house.

Being outside did felt good, he could not deny it. After years pacing the floor of his cell, watching the world outside of it only through his mind palace, the breeze he could feel on his face felt like a soft caress. While he could not put his worries towards Will totally away, he took the opportunity to taste the fresh air properly, he had not been able to do so until then.

He had drive to the nearest town, which was one hour away from their hideout. The house being in the middle of nowhere helped with the discretion they needed while they rested and recover strength. It affords them discretion and avoidance from unnecessary encounters with curious passerby, providing them a protection from preening eyes and unwanted attention.

Luckily for them, the nearest town came with a market that was big enough and frequented by a crowd large enough for him to go by, unremarked, anonymous amongst others. Hannibal took the time, walking down the aisle and observing the different stalls around him and the many products they were holding. He decided to buy fresh vegetables and leaned pieces of meat. Something he could use to brew a few stews and simple meals. Unfortunately he wouldn't be able to serve more complex dishes to Will, not in his state. He could only hope that time for elevated three dishes dinner would come soon enough. While his personal tastes rested with recipes that needed at least fifteen different ingredients or so he could recognize that cooking meal with fresh ingredients, as simple as they were, would already be a great improvement from the canned food they had to relay onto until this point. He could always prepare different dishes for himself while he feed stew and soup to Will but he wasn't willing to do so.

Even though the man was certainly not being able to pay attention to it, it still felt like something they could share together to Hannibal. One small thing shared between them, the first of many if he had anything to say about it.

After some complementary purchases, Hannibal started towards his car, passing by a coffee. He saw a newspaper laying on a table, abandoned by its previous owner. He picked it up on his way.

Opening the car's door, he placed the bag of groceries in the passenger seat and sat down into the driver seat. Unfolding the newspaper, he held it against the wheel, scanning quickly through the pages he found no mention of his escape nor of their disappearances.

Jack had preferred to hold the information from the public eyes then. At least for now.

It could only mean two things. Either he had solid proofs of where they were hiding, planning to catch them in the more effective way; or he had not a clue at all of where he could find them. Avoiding alerting the public and its inevitable false witnessing and calls that would follow the information of the escape of the Chesapeake Ripper and an ex special FBI agent not stranger to violence and murder accusations.

To Hannibal, the second option seemed more likely to be the truth. Jack was keeping the press away from their case, stalling for time he could use to seek a way to find them. Apart from the scene from the cliff house, where they fought against and left dead the Great Red Dragon, there was no clue possible indicating the direction they took. The cannibal had been careful to not let any documents, any tangible proof of his hidden possessions. Their new house being one amongst them. He also made sure, despite his exhaustion at the time, to take backway roads, free from any security camera. They arrived at their current location safely, undetected by the FBI's eyes and Hannibal would keep on making sure they stay safe until they would decide to move on.

So far, their escape went well, except for Will's state, obviously.

They had enough money to live comfortably and more. Hannibal had been saving funds into untraceable accounts for years now, always prepared if the need for a large, undetectable, sum of money arose. Adding it to the Lecter's inheritance he had not touched since he came into it the day of his majority. His fortunes included a handful of houses, spread across the United States in strategic places, and some in Europe were waiting for them too, along with his aunt's old residence in Japan. Transportation to the old continent was not a source of worries. Through the years Hannibal had made a great lot of contacts, as unsavoury as they were they still provided ways to cross the sea, discreet and without any question asked. Perfect for what they would need when they chose to leave the United States, to start somewhere new, away from the hunting FBI.

Folding back the newspaper, Hannibal put it along the groceries bag on the passenger seat. Yes, their situation was promising in terms of laying low and driving away the attention of Jack Crawford and the rest of the FBI. With a rare smile upon his lips, Hannibal put his hands on the wheel and started to drive, impatient to be at Will's side again.

Arriving at his destination he stored the groceries away and poured himself a glass from the bottle of wine he had bought at the market. It was certainly not of the same quality of the ones he had in his cellar back in his Baltimore house but it was still good, even if not the most refined.

With his glass in hand, he went back to the bedroom, ready to sit near Will for a couple of hours before heading to diner's preparation.

Only his incredible reflexes prevented him from letting his glass fall unto the floor when his eyes fell upon the bed.

To be continued

Chapter End Notes

Hi again my Peeps!

I ought to say I'm sorry about that tiny cliffhanger but honestly I'm not, I love tension ending chapter myself and I could not not take the occasion to write one myself haha. But do not worry, the sequel is coming up soon, since I've started it before ending editing this one...

I hope you enjoyed this chapter as well as the first one!

As for how long this fic will be, I currently have no idea. I have a plan written down of what I want to happen but since I let the words carry me across the story I do not know how many chapters I will need to tell the full thing.

Anyway, I hope you will stick with me until the next chapter at least! Haha

Thanks for the ones whom left kudos and/or comments, it's really appreciated!!

To the ones whom might want to discover more of my things my art tumblr is right here
And if you just want to come by and say hello here is my main one! (Aka my fandom pit one)
Bye bye 'til next time!

Le réveil de la bête

Chapter Summary

Hannibal can't contain his feelings in regards of Will's state evolution.

Chapter Notes

Hi Peeps!
Thanks for reading so far, I hope you will enjoy this new chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal could only hold his breath as he hesitantly padded towards the bed. Though Will appeared to still be unconscious, showing no reaction to the doctor nearing by, he had moved on his own during his rest, now laying on his side.

Until then Hannibal had been the one to move the man, manipulating his limbs when tending to his wounds, when cleaning and dressing him.
Moving Will's body had not been a particularly difficult task for Hannibal. He was familiar enough with handling body parts, having gained a lot of skills in this peculiar department from his myriad of killing. But, as much as he usually enjoyed taking care of the dark haired man, it was not a pleasant task either. He would assuredly have preferred to not be the only source of movement of the man's body. As much as he tried to distance himself from the situation, he could not keep himself from associating the slack body under his hand to the man he sought company from. It was hard for him to see the man that usually tensed at the slightest touch on his skin not reacting at all during the whole process of moving him.

And now, now the man had move by himself, rolling slightly from his previous position to a more natural one. While he was laying on his back he had not really looked alive, despite his breathing, the position then being too still, too stiff. Now he actually looked like he was sleeping, his knees bend under the covers and his arms joined in front of his chest. His eyebrows were pinched in a pained expression, his jaw clenched. Signs of stimuli perception, of pain perception, due to the aching injuries on his right side.
Signs of consciousness. Even if not a full awake state, it was more than the lack of… Of everything Will had shown until then.

Hannibal sank into the chair, he brought it so close to the bed that his knees were now pressed against the covers. Forgetting that he was holding it, he nearly spilled the content of his glass on the bed. Quickly setting it aside on the bedside table, he turned his undivided

attention to Will. Though he was beyond relief and joy to see such progress from the man, he could only hope that Will had not fully woken up yet. If so, he would have found himself alone in an unknown place without strength to go and look around, to defend himself if needed, utterly vulnerable.
For Hannibal wished for the full recovery of Will, he hoped for it to happen when he was guarding him. Only if to be able to reassure the empath, to explain their situation to him. And, he would not lie, to be able to look over him for any cognitive impairments that may have been caused by the shock of their fall.

Carefully, he examined the state of the bed, undisturbed except for some crinkles in the fabrics of the covers. There were no signs of frantic, frightened, gestures. The doctor concluded that the man had made no moves other than rolling on his side, putting himself in the position he was now in.
Hannibal tenderly traced along Will's jaw, slightly scratching the stubble growing there. He let his fingers drift into the dark curls covering Will's head, untangling some of the strands with gentle gestures, appreciating the softness of it between his fingers.
Retrieving his hand from Will's hair, he reached for his hand instead, slowly passing his thumb across it.
It was in this position, hands holding Will's, head turned towards him, slightly tilting down, that sleep crept up on him after two days of restlessness.

It was dark when he opened his eyes, the only light coming from the clear moon outside of the window. Glancing at his watch he realized that dinnertime was long passed and that they were now well into the night. He went to stand up, only for his movement to be aborted by a slight tug on his hand. Looking down he saw that Will's hand was clenching his own. Smiling at the sight, it seemed that Will was getting better and better with every passing hours, Hannibal untangled their fingers, resting the now close hand against the covers, adjusting those around the form resting in the bed.

Dragging himself to the bathroom across the hallway, he undressed, putting his clothes in the laundry hamper and his bandages in the trash bin sitting next to the sink. He turned the shower on, letting the water heat up before placing himself under it. Leaning his head against the wall, putting his forehead against the cold tiles, he closed his eyes. The water was pouring on his body, flowing down his shoulders to the dimples on his low back, following a sinuous path down his legs before disappearing into the drain. The tension in Hannibal's shoulders melted with it, slowly reducing, leaving him almost fully relaxed.
With a sigh, he pushed away from the wall and cleaned himself with the light scented products he favoured. After carefully rinsing his hair he turned off the shower and stepped out of it. He reached the sink and looked in the mirror. His eyes and mouth were still surrounded by tired lines, clues that he had not yet regain all his strength, but he was on the path to that. Reaching his razor blade he took care of the rough stubble that had taken place on his chin and cheeks.

Contrary to Will, the doctor preferred to present himself to the world with a smooth face, along with short and well combed hair. This style assured him to pass as the elegant man he was. Though, as long as he stayed away from his unique, if not weird, suits, this look let him pass as a quite unremarkable man among others. Not under or too dressed up.
While many could not separate the peculiar suits from the concept of Hannibal, he knew that

he would not wear them again for a long time, if not ever. As much as he liked them and the attention they brought to him, he knew that he would pass on extravagant clothes for the near future. It was more easy to be confounded among other if you dressed like them. Also, the one he was peacoking to with his usual clothes was presently resting two rooms across the one he was in. There was no need for them any more.

The lack of patterned fabrics might even be a great advantage for them. Since he had first came in the United Sates, many years ago, he had not worn anything else than suits while in the company of others. Of living others, he actually didn't dress up for all his murders and private cooking sessions. It helped him construct an elegant and cultivated facade, perfect to dissimulate within the high society and stay away from any unwanted attention. It was true that he preferred a refined life style, his house in Baltimore and way of living there were proof enough. But, as with clothes, it was more a mean to hide comfortably to him than actual necessity. A part of his carefully constructed human persona, facade placed in front of the veil hiding the creature in the shadows.

He would not hesitate to leave it behind him, not willing to let the FBI find him through traces of his elevated tastes as one Alana Bloom had done before. For, if he had not been really hiding in Florence, secretly hoping that Will would be the one to catch on this peculiar trail and follow it to the cannibal, now he wished for an undetectable life until they could permit themselves more extravagances. Also, besides the need to lay down for some times, he was aware that a simpler way of living might be better adapted to Will, the man not being used to live with more than was necessary. And Hannibal wished for the empath to be the more comfortable he could get at his side.
So, yes, he would trade patterned clothes to plainer ones if it could assure him the presence of Will in his life. Going as far as accepting dog's hair on them if it pleased the other, knowing the ever growing affection Will had for fur covered beings. He chuckled at the fact that he would concede so much to Will if the other demand it of him, he would submit to most of his wishes, it not all of them.

The man that used to look curiously down on Will was now at his feet, looking up to him and hoping to gain the smallest sign of affection.
And the other had no idea of it.

Letting go of his trail of thoughts, he left the bathroom, still completely naked except for the towel he had put across his shoulders. Closing the door, he stepped towards the bedroom he had store his things in, not assuming that Will would want to share a bedroom with him. Not yet at least.

Once there, he put sleeping pants on with a simple long-sleeved cotton shirt. He headed back to Will's bedroom, crossing it to access the adjacent bathroom. He gathered a basin full of warm water along with soap and a wash clothe, some bandages and an antiseptic solution. Holding the items in his hands he stepped backward and reached the bed.
Laying them on the bedside table, he pulled the covers so that he could start undressing Will. He cleaned him with gentle passes of the wet wash clothe, leathering the soft skin with soap and rinsing it. He then undressed Will's injury.

The skin on both cuts was pink, risen along the seams he had sewn into them, no longer angrily red and prompt to get infected. Still, by precaution Hannibal cleaned them both with the antiseptic solution he had brought. The wounds would slowly close back together, leaving behind them scars that Will would most likely bear for the rest of his days. While Hannibal had tended to them in the best of his capacities, even him was unable to prevent the skin from scarring, the cuts had been too deep to do so. But he didn't despise them, in contrary he quite liked them, undeniable proof that what had happened with the Dragon had been real. Memories of the shared moment between him and Will, the first one shared as equals.

And, honestly, Will already had his lot of scars, so one more or less would not really make a difference. At least not the one laying on his collarbone. The one on his cheek might be more difficult for Will to deal with, to accept. Hannibal did not think that Will would appreciate it as he did himself since it was his own face and that it was a visible link between them. Not willing to think of the possibility that Will might still deny and reject him after all they've done, Hannibal start redressing the cuts.
Well, at least Will could still hide the scar on his cheek if he decided to let his beard grow slightly. The image of a full bearded Will crossed Hannibal's mind and he felt a slight shiver at the thought of it. Now was not the moment to let himself be affected by Will's appearance. As long as the man did not wake up it felt inappropriate to show any proof of his desire for him. Reclaiming his mind and pushing indecent thoughts to the back of it, Hannibal picked up the items and went to store them back in the bathroom.

While he was more interested and attracted by Will's mind he could not deny that the appearance of the man was not an inconvenience. As Hannibal presented himself as an elegant man, Will presented himself as someone rough whom did not take care of his looks. Unruly dark curls, rough persistent stubble and dark circles under the eyes were the characteristics of his face. He wore well-worn clothes, covered in dog's fur and smelling slightly of it too. Though, behind that gruff exterior appearance, Will was a beautiful man. His face had soft traits, with a defined jaw, lean nose and dark blue eyes that one could not help but fall into when Will was not hiding them behind glasses he did not need. His shoulder were lean but still muscular, as was the rest of him. He possessed that particular beauty that Greek heroes held in myths, sculpted with grace. His whole being seemed as delicate as it was strong. The peculiar beauty or a powerful man.

Sitting back in the chair Hannibal thought about the life they would live when Will woke up. Yes, Will could easily accept it and even appreciate it, a simple life where they would buy what they need and little else.
He observed the man for a few minutes, reassuring himself with the sound of the slow breaths and the warm touch of the hand he had grasped. This time he willingly close his eyes and let sleep take him for another dance, comforted by the hope of Will waking up soon to share his days with him.

As much as hopes went, his did not become real during the rest of the night. It was to the sight of still closed eyes that Hannibal opened his owns to. Letting go of Will's hand, he stood and stretch with a stifled yawn.
He considered what to do when the decision was made for him by his grumbling stomach. Realizing that he had not eat since lunch of the day before and that, by consequence, Will had not eaten since then as well. He ought to prepare breakfast. As he stepped down the stairs

separating him from the kitchen, he decided to cook a light but still nourishing soup for both of them. He would also cook some eggs on the side for himself. Though he preferred to eat the same as did Will, the lack of solid food was not helping him in his regain of strength. He would need to eat some other dishes to accompany the soups and stews he fed to Will and ate himself. Putting some music on, a classic soft tune to keep him company, he started the preparations for breakfast.

Cutting some vegetables, he added them to the boiling water where he had previously set some chicken broth along with thin noodles. He covered the pot with its appropriate lid, he cracked two eggs and let them cook in a pan. Waiting for it to cook, he sat on a stool near the counter.
He grabbed the phone he had bought some times along the preparation of their first supposed escape. Turning it on he started to search news sites for mentions of their case. There was none on the big titled websites. He then searched for the tattle crime website.

There it was.

Among the “Monster of the Week” articles Freddie relayed on when there were no novelties from the Chesapeake Ripper, was a small article. No picture were added to it. It was a small text, different from the long texts claiming the madness of one or other Freddie usually wrote. Though the article was not eye-catching if you were not searching for it, it apparently attracted a lot of attention if the comments section was of any indication. Typical of Freddie to hide valued informations among others, she probably decided to hide this peculiar article among the less important other ones in an apparently innocent way, only to attract more attention to it.

The small text stated that both the Chesapeake Ripper and ex special Agent Will Graham were missing after an attempted transfer of the proved, with an emphasis on proved, killer from his previous establishment. As small as the text was. Freddie apparently did not felt any guilt at using the term of Murder Husbands several times. Though, skipping through the various comments, Hannibal could see that the term was well-received within the fans community of The Tattle Crime. One of the users even wishing for the both of them to be eloping in the nature near the user residence so they might meet them.

Thinking that if they actually met the user would probably end in a plate, Hannibal could only reassure himself that their current isolate house was a good thing. Until Will show sign of acceptance towards Hannibal’s favoured meat at least.
The rest of the comments were either wishes for Will and him to be alive and well from weird killers fans, the kind Hannibal hated, either people trying to guess where and how they were at the moment and others users claiming that the escape was a horrible thing and that they would not be able to sleep as long as the killers were roaming free. Fewer yet were claiming that Will was innocent and had been dragged along by Hannibal.
It seemed that, for the majority of the Tattle Crime readers, Will was guilty in the escape and past crimes he had once been accused of.

The text had been post not long along, nearly before Hannibal turned on his phone. Thinking that Jack was certainly surveying Freddie's website closely, it would not be long before the article would be put down. Jack would see to it, Hannibal was sure of that. But, as with

everything else, what was once online will stay online. No doubt that one of Freddie's fans had already saved and upload the article onto another website. It would be no time before the public mass heard about the killers' escape. It would not be long until Jack had to admit to everyone else, his superiors included, that he had lost the trail of the most dangerous man he came across in his career. It was almost certain that Jack would be fired this time, he was already on a thin line as it was. Though, Hannibal knew that being evicted by the FBI would not stop him from hunting the cannibal and, by consequences, Will too. It would only set him more in his determination to catch them. Since his job was the last thing holding him from breaking the law after Bella's death years ago, losing it would only push him towards adopting more uncommon and more dishonest ways to achieve his self given mission.

Well, let him come, Hannibal thought with a dangerous smirk, they would be ready for him.

The smell of a well cooked dish forced him to store the phone away in his pocket. As Jack's hunt for them was an important matter, it was not of the most importance to Hannibal right now. Taking care of Will was.
Serving two portions of the soup and placing his eggs onto a plate, he gathered the lot of it onto the tray and went up the stairs.
Will had moved once again, now resting back on his back, his head tilted to the left side and his right hand resting on his chest.
Smiling at the sight, Hannibal went and fed the other man, eating his own meal after him. After taking care of the dishes he sat himself comfortably into the chair. Once again taking role of a guardian over Will. He would willingly act as such as long as the man would need it. And, from deep within himself, he knew that he would resiliently protect Will against anything and everything as long as the other man let him do it.

It was well into the afternoon, nearly the evening, when the silence pressing down on Hannibal's spirit finally found its end.
A small sound escaped Will who, in his rest, was moving again, his body trying on his own to found the most comfortable position, one that would take some of the pain from the Dragon's gifts away.
The first sound uttered by Will after days of unbreakable silence was, of course, a groan. How typical of him, thought Hannibal affectionately. He just had the time to let his eyes run along the form of Will before the man moved and groaned again.
His expression was more defined than before, clearly a mask of pain and discomfort. His face had become pale once again, as one would be under pain. Pearling on his brow was sweat, as if the man was doing some effort. And he was in some way, thought the doctor.
If Will was regaining a conscious state it also meant that his pain sensors would be fully functioning again. And they would have a lot to work on with the large cuts marring Will's skin, along with the bruises and aches that came with the fall into the sea. Hannibal was quite familiar with those since he had some of his own that would not let him move as much as he would like to, nor let him sit in the same position for more than an hour. A small price to pay for their lives but still a bother.
Not willing for Will to come back into this reality only to meet pain as his first companion, Hannibal headed to the bathroom where he picked a syringe and filled it with a clear liquid.

Back in his place, next to Will, he grabbed the empath's arm and, with a sweep of antiseptic, pierced the skin, slowly pushing the product into his veins. After cleaning the tiny red dot left

behind, he put a small bandage on him.

“This is a mild painkiller, Will. You might feel slightly sluggish because of it but, trust me, it’s better that rather than feeling your whole body screaming at you with pain.”

With a slight tap against Will’s clenched hand, he went and put the medical supplies away. The painkiller rapidly took effect, Will becoming seemingly more relaxed at each passing second. The pinch between his eyebrows had disappeared and his jaw had unclenched after a short time. His shoulders sacked a little, free from the tension that had been within them until now. In short, he was at ease.
Even if his body seemed more relax and his few movements more slow than before, the painkiller did not seem to have any effect on his progress towards consciousness. Will continued to emit some noises, mostly groans and a soft moan here and there, well into the night.
It was the lack of noise from a longer period that pulled Hannibal from his thoughts. As much as he had been uncomfortable with Will’s silence before, his tired series of sounds had been a lullaby to the doctor’s ears, recomforting him and plunging him into a positive trail of thoughts. Turning his attention to the bed he first saw that Will’s hands were now completely relaxed, softly resting on top of the soft cover.
His eyes followed the lines of Will’s body up until they set on Will’s face. Or, to be more accurate, on the opened eyes that met his owns.

“Will?” Breathed Hannibal, whispering the man’s name in disbelief, almost like a prayer.

He obtained no reaction except a blink of the blue eyes. Grabbing the other’s hand in a need to anchor himself to the situation, to reality, he asked again.

“Will? My dear boy, can you hear me?”

Another blink. But not timed well enough to seem like an answer from the man. Now that his initial surprise at seeing the man more awake than before had passed, Hannibal was able to see that Will’s eyes were blurred and that, most certainly, his eyes were open but unseeing for the moment.
After a short time Will’s eyelids took more time at each blink, his eyes closing more and more until they stayed shut.
Will was apparently back to sleep.
Even so, a wide smile had taken place on Hannibal’s face, one he did not care to erase since no one was there to witness it.
Will had woken up. For a short moment, sure, but he had woken up.

Closing his own eyes, he leaned his head back, resting it upon the chair’s back.

Will had woken up.

All would be well

To be continued

Chapter End Notes

Hi again my Peeps!
Thanks for reading and sticking with this story! I hope you enjoyed this chapter, which was the most fun for me to write so far!
Will has finally woken up! Well... Not fully but you knwow what I mean!

Thanks for the peeps who left kuddos and/or comments! And the one suscribing too! Love y'all!
'Til next time! (coming soon, I promise)

EDIT: I switched the chapters' titles for new ones! It's now in french in the text haha! (You probably do not care but I liked the idea of having them in my own language eheh). Also I edited and corrected some typos and errors that some Peeps, who receive my entire gratitude, pointed out to me there and there. So thanks for being helpful in the mostle gentle way my lovely Peeps! This time I really take my leave, for now! Salut!

Vous me recevez?

Chapter Summary

After Will awakening, Hannibal is confronted by a difficulty of communication with the other man.

Chapter Notes

Hello my dear Peeps!
Here is the fourth chapter!
I took more time to write it than I planned but you know how life and its surprises can change someone plans!

Anyways, I hope you will enjoy it!
Good reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was with a lighted heart that Hannibal started the following day. Will's awaking the day before had lifted the weight that had tempered on his mood previously. Though Will had not stayed awake long, the simple fact that he had open his eyes was more than enough to bring joy to the doctor.
Even better, during the night Will had woken up several times, though he fell back to sleep quickly each time, he managed to stay awake a little bit longer each time.

Through the morning, Hannibal decided to stay, yet again, at Will's sides, talking with him the whole time. Well, talk to him more than with him since the empath was still non responsive to the flow of sentences addressed to him.
Hannibal let his thoughts expressed themselves freely, talking about all the things that crossed his mind.
He talked about his time in Paris, where he lived with his aunt, where he started studying medicine, finding calm and serenity in anatomy books and late nights in the morgue of the university hospital.
He talked about his travel across Italy, filling in the knowledge Will already had of it. Explaining how he found himself in the beauty of Italian cities. It was in Italy that he really explored his hedonist tendencies, taking pleasure in the food and wine there, admiring art and architecture, attending to his first operas. His first steps into high society, his first games of hide-and-seek and elaborate manipulations with the men and women of the world.

Italy was also the first place where he took a life.
Yes, it was in Italy that he reached his inner monster and made peace with it. Perfecting his chrysalis and beginning his full transition towards the being he now was.

He went to Italy as a boy and left it as a something more powerful than a man.

It was during his retelling of his arrival and installation in the United States that Will woke up again.
As each time he did before, Hannibal stopped his story, grabbed the man's hand and asked.

"Will?"
Before Will had just blinked vaguely in answer to his inquisitions, now his eyes fully planting themselves into Hannibal's gaze. There was a fierce gleam resurgingg in them when their eyes met.
"Will? How do you feel?"
This was met with a confusion on Will's part. He opened his mouth to answer but nothing came put except for a moan of pain. His hand flew to his cheek to check out the source of the sudden ache that flared his nerves alive only to be caught by Hannibal before it could reach its destination.

"You should not touch it, Will. I've sewn the cut back together but it's not closed yet. I will redo your bandages in a few hours."

All he got for answer was a confused and pained look from Will. The hand clutched in his own was trembling, as was the rest of Will's body. He looked afraid now. The empath tried to retake his hand back, pulling it towards his face but Hannibal resisted it.

"I'm afraid I have to insist on you not touching it my dear boy. You do not want to disturb your bandages."

Will tried to say something probably something quite rude by the look on his face, only to stopped quickly, flinching from the pain meaning from his cheek.
Will felt like his cheek was completely torn apart, the whole side of his face rip in two. Even if he could not touch it, due to the hand still forcefully restraining his, he could feel the bandages stuck on, his skin, crinkling with the small movements he made with his jaw, trying to determine what range of mobility he still had.

"You should probably not try to speak for the moment, either."
Will only answer to the doctor's input was a snarl. He finally managed to snatch his hand from him and angrily crossed his arm, turning his eyes to the wall, escaping, the weight of the intimidating scrutiny from Hannibal.His reaction was due in part to his inability to talk but also to the fact that, whatever the other was saying at the moment, did not make any sense to him. He understood the words but, strangely, they did not seem to make any sense together.

"Now, my boy, do you feel any other pain coming from somewhere else than your cheek or collarbone? If so, could you point it to me?"

Receiving only another confused quick glance before Will turned his eyes back to the wall, Hannibal worried. He did try to not let it show on his face but, if the inquiring expression on

Will's face when the man glances back at him was of any indication, he completely failed.

"Do you understand what I'm telling you my dear?"

Will was facing him once again, abandoning the pretence of watching the wall, his eyebrows were pinched, his expression questioning.
Oh.
The empath did not understand what he was telling him.
Hannibal gathered his features into a calm and sympathetic expression, slowly reached for one of Will's hand and gently squeeze it.

"You are going to be well my boy. I will be here and help you overcome this."

Even if he could not understand the words coming out of Hannibal's lips, Will could not miss the supporting attitude emanating from the older man. Not willing to let the gesture be for nothing he squeezed his hand back. Despite his will, he felt immensely tired, his eyes closing by themselves.
The doctor seemed to catch on, he patted his hand and put back the covers that had fell down from his agitation.

When Will fell asleep Hannibal immediately went to pick his phone from where he had left it previously. The younger man's inability to understand him was worrying. Hannibal would need to explore in more depth the extent of the consequences of their fall on Will, but he would not be an easy thing to do. Specially since the man was not able to speak at the moment. He could always write if asked but written language was not representative of speak language.
There seemed to be a neurological impairment at cause. The doctor would need to access some medical facilities and put Will through some test. Particularly an MRI and a cerebral scan.

It was time for Hannibal to put some of his contacts to use.
After a few phone calls, they had an appointment planned for the next week at a clinic a few hours drive away.

The doctor whom they were going to meet was a shallow man that did many things that would not look good in the eyes of justice if they were to be exposed in daylight.
Hannibal had been approached by the man before after he published a paper on one of his patient. He had used some... Unusual methods on the woman that had inspired the article. Though the article had created a debate on said methods among the medical body at the time, there was nothing unethical about them.
Well, at least, not the written version of the case. Hannibal had treated it like one of his extravagant dessert, coat sugaring just enough for it to pass well into the public eyes, to provoke admiration at his unusual choices.
Or, as it were, most of the public eye.
The shallowed man had contact Hannibal after reading the publication, insinuating that he knew some dark things, more than what the good doctor had written. Which, Hannibal knew, was impossible. He had been, as with almost everything else he did, particularly cautious about this whole thing.
No, the man was just trying to blackmail him with false facts.

Stupid of him, really.
Unfortunately for the caller, Hannibal had easily played him back. Gathering informations on the man, he easily picked up some of his dirty secrets. Some of those he may have mentioned to some of the man's esteemed colleagues during conferences. Of course, he had done so the source of those rumours could not be associated with him if fingers went pointing. But he had made sure that his target knew were the attack had come from. Whom he ought to not have tried to attack in the first place.
Whom he ought to fear from this point.

Of course, knowing that dirty secrets were one of the best weapons, Hannibal had kept some of his founded informations to himself, assuring his victim that he would hold onto them except if the man try to cross him again in the future.
The fact that he could now blackmail the man into doing what he wanted was, of course, a bonus.

Which was how the good doctor had got them an appointment that would not need to be marked down in official registers at an unusual hour were they would not cross paths with anyone else to avoid any witnesses he may have to kill after that. Which was good.
Will was already unwell enough as it was, no need for the doctor to contrary more than he needed.

Until the day of their appointment, Hannibal would do anything he was able to comfort and reassure the empath. He would try communicating with him through other means than oral speech.

Once again he was thankful for Will's empathic abilities. Apart from making the man special into his eyes, they would help them to overcome the communication impairment they were currently confronted with. Even if Will could not understand what was said, maybe even written, to him, he would probably still be able to picked up on body language and clues that would help him interpret what his interlocutor want to communicate to him.
Even if writing did not work out for them, Hannibal was sure they would find a way. Both of them were highly intelligent and resourceful. Specially when it came to get their wishes accomplished.

Despite the unfortunate inability Will found himself with for the moment and the worry it occurs within him, Hannibal still felt some kind of joy. Will, while he may have been distracted by his own state, had shown no signs of rejection towards the doctor. Of course, he had not smiled and eagerly opened his arms for him but, all the things considered, it was already more than the cannibal had asked for at that point. Will had not reject him. He had not tried to leave him or asked him, in a way or another, to be left alone.
No.
He even had squeezed his hand back despite the confusing state he had been in.
Which, to Hannibal was more than a good sign of Will accepting the fact that they were in this situation together. Having the confirmation, after too many days of incertitude in Hannibal eyes, that Will was not currently planning on leaving him, was a true blessing.
And, knowing how stubborn the dark haired man usually was, he would probably not plan on leaving his side, his decision being shown in his first moment of consciousness by not rejecting the doctor.

They will, of course, need to discuss more about their arrangement. About the how and where. About the concessions they should make to live in the most comfortably way possible. Hannibal, being honest with himself, knew that he would probably be the one more willing to make any of those concessions, wanting to please Will like he had never wanted to please someone else before.
Except for Mischa.

But, to be able to discuss of such things, they would need to found a common communication ground. Hannibal could not wait for the cut in Will's cheek to close so the other man could try and talk. The doctor was hoping that the empath was not suffering from any impairment in the process of producing speech. For Will to be unable to express his thoughts and idea seemed like a horrible punishment. To the both of them.
Will, of course, would resent the inability to express himself. Particularly since he had, finally, found someone he could fully express himself to. To Hannibal he could show all of himself, all the sides of his personality, all wishes, as dark as they were, could be told to the doctor. To lose that ability before really having the opportunity to use it would be a terrible loss.

To Hannibal, not being able to know what went in the head of the younger man would be absolutely torturing. Never had he met someone as interesting as the empath. And he knew how dangerous for the man it could be to be locked in his own mind. Will needed to let out his inner shadows, or they would devour him from the inside.
Leaving the cannibal alone once more.
That is why it was primordial for them to resolve this situation.

The next time Will woke up it as to the sight of Hannibal holding a tray from where were coming delicious, enticing scents of food. His stomach did not need to grumble for him to realize how hungry it was at the moment. However, at the low sound and the annoyed expression it provoked on the younger man's face, Hannibal chuckled despite himself.

"I would say I'm sorry that you're feeling hunger, Will. But, Honestly, I fed you as well as I could, given the situation."

Putting the tray on the bedsides table, he helped Will sat down, his back leaning on the head board, covers falling around his waist. Hannibal had hesitated before putting a shirt on Will, knowing that the man could sweat around in his sleep. But, for now, he was glad he did, no doubt Will would not have been truly comfortable sitting half-naked under the doctor's eyes, unable to talk himself out of the scrutiny. For, as difficult it had been for Hannibal to repress the more... Physical desires he held for Will while the man was unconscious, out of respect for the empath. Now it was nearly impossible. Only his impeccable hold on his emotions made him able to reign over himself. That and the large shirt that was hiding the pale skin from him.

Clearing his throat along with his mind, Hannibal grabbed one of the bowl and gave it to Will.

"While you were asleep I fed you mostly liquids. Now that you're awake we will see what you are going to eat until your cheek heals completely." Even though he doubts that the

empath was actually understanding him he could not retain from explaining things to Will, no willing to let another dull silence takes its place between them.
As he spoke his eyes went to Will's cheek. At this, the empath start to raise his hand towards it, only to stop when he caught the glare that Hannibal sent to it. He let his hand fall back on the bed with a deep sigh. Looking back at Hannibal he tried to convey through his eyes that he did not understand what the other was trying to say to him.
The doctor, being perfectly able to read such an expression point to the bandaged cheek then to the plates of mashed potatoes that were waiting on the tray.

"I made some of your favourite dishes. You once told me that one of the few full meals you got as a child was your father's spiced mashed pommes de terre."

At the realization in Will's eyes when he caught on the scent emanating from the plates, the doctor added.

"While you did not give me the full recipe, I tried to make do based on the description you gave me at the time. I hope you will be able to eat it and, if so, you will enjoy it."

The smaller man looked back at him, his face breaking into a one sided small smile. Not willing to hurt himself too much but unable to contain his gratitude towards Hannibal at the small but meaningful gesture. Will knew that Hannibal despised simpler food, inelegant as they were, more pleased by three dishes meals than by a full, hearty plates containing less than a dozen ingredients.
Hannibal, at Will's reaction, could not hold back a smile himself. Gently, he tapped against the bowl Will was still holding in his left hand with a spoon to attract the man's attention to it.

"But, first, you will need to eat this soup. In case you could not eat the plate's content I would be reassured to know that, at least, you have this in your stomach until I prepare something more adapted to your current needs."

Glancing down, looking at the content of the bowl in his hand and taking in the scent coming from it, Will realized what the dish was. He looked back at Hannibal, an amused glint in his eyes met the one that was residing in the doctor's eyes.
"Yes, I did prepare you a chicken soup." He paused a short moment before adding "This time, however, I promise you it is chicken soup".

Will, perceiving no malice coming from the other man, could only shake his head with an amused expression, a small chuckled escaping his own lips despite his carefulness to not move the right side of his mouth too much.

With an exaggerated pompous gesture, he clinked his bowl with the one that was held by the doctor and start eating his soup.
The silence was only broke by the noise of them eating, Will slurping a bit more than he wished but excused by the cannibal due to half of his face currently sitting under bandages.

Feeling less famished at the feeling of the soup sitting in his stomach, Will made a move for one of the plate, careful to not move his right arm too much. Though his cheek pained him

much more, he was not ignorant of the wound on his collarbone. The pain may be more dull there but was as persistent as the one coming from his cheek.

"Careful, Will." said Hannibal softly, picking up the plate and holding it to the empath so he could grab it without moving too much. "The cut may incapacitated in your movements for a few weeks yet" he alerted him, tilting his chin in the direction of Will's right shoulder so the other could catch on his meaning.

While he could have mentioned it, since the dark haired man was more catching on his body language rather than his words, Hannibal averted to say that the injury in Will' collarbone might have a greater impact on his ability of moving his arm than he let on. It would be his work from now one to provide Will with physical therapy in order for the man to have less residual pain possible.
He did some physical therapy himself those last days, forcing himself through the pain, willing to get better the fastest he could. Contrary to Will's cheek, his own injuries were now closed. Through he had been pierced from back to front with a bullet, the point of entrance and exit were rather small compared to the dash on Wil's face. He had been the luckiest of the two of them.
He wished it had not been the case.

Slow but determined, Will managed to eat the whole dish. He was glad that it was Hannibal who cooked it, resulting in a well mashed plate of potatoes, easy to swallow without chewing it too much. And, even if the soup had taste good, this tasted way better. The taste of it a reminiscent of the good times of his childhood, through better. As watching a memory through a coloured glass, colouring the best parts and dulling the bad parts of it. The fact that he was, finally, eating solid food after days of liquid diet didn't seem to go unnoticed by his own body. Feeling relaxing full after the meal, he felt less tired than he did before. Which was telling something since he had felt the call of sleep since the moment he opened his eyes. Now, though he was not feeling like getting up yet, he was not feeling sleepy either.
Hannibal, who had busied himself with the empty dishes, willing to bring them back to the kitchen and cleaned them was distracted from his task by a groan of Will which sounds like a distorted version of his name.
Smiling at the stubbornness of the man, and the fact that apparently Will would be able to form words once his bandages went off, Hannibal told him.

"Now, my dear boy, what did I tell you about speaking?" Not waiting for an answer, he continued "You should wait until you skin is well back together before doing so."

Yet, he could not feel any resentment towards the trial from Will, far to happy with himself that his name had been the fist thing the empath had try to say.
He turned his full attention to the man, even with his hands holding the full tray.

Will was conscious that conversation between the doctor and him would be difficult, if not impossible giving his still aching face. But he was unwilling to be left alone with nothing to do. He felt too tired to move around but, glancing at the room he spotted the wall covered by shelves full of books, then the book that laid abandoned on the bedsides table. He reached it and hold it in the doctor's direction.

Understanding what the other wanted, Hannibal tilted his head towards the trail that was still in his grasps, gently shaking it once to support his next words.

"I will just take care of those, my dear boy. I will come back as soon as I am done."

Feeling satisfied with what he understood, Will nodded once, letting the other know that the message passed between them.
Glad of it, Hannibal pursued.

"However, first I will need to tend to your injuries".

This Will did not understand but nodded anyway, watching the man leaving the man only to came back a few minutes later. When his eyes fell on the items in the doctor's hands, he understood what the other had meant.
It was with a groan of both pain and grumpiness that Will let Hannibal help him out of his shirt. While the doctor busied himself with tending to his wounds, Will felt some anger rose in him. The pain made itself more present due to the cleansing of the cuts and, while Will could not see them, he was pretty sure that they were not that pretty to look at.
He felt resentment at Hannibal for the slightest moment, thinking that, if the man had not crossed his path once again he would still be in his house with his few dogs, with his wife and his adopted son.
Happy with his simple life.

No.
Not happy.
He was not willing to lie to himself any more.

Nor was he willing to lie to the man that was currently taking care of him with more tenderness than anyone had done so previously. Not even Molly when he had come up to the house, battered because he had run after one of their dogs. Not even his own father had cherish his well-being as Hannibal seemed to be doing.
He admitted to himself that, while he pretended to be happy with his newfound family, he was not. In truth, they had been more of a crutch, a crude replacement to the family he had lost once Abigail died and once Hannibal let the FBI caged him up.
Thinking of Abigail caused him more pain than both of his injuries did. Even after the years he felt like his heart was bleeding because of it. And, while he had forgiven for it, he had yet to forgive himself. He was not sure he would be able to do so one day.

Thinking of his lost past made him think of the future that was laying before him. Before them. It was at the sight of a blooded Hannibal, panting next to the fresh corpse of one Francis Dolarhyde, that Will had realized his future could not be made apart from the doctor. He couldn't live without him, now he would try to live with him.

It was with a sigh that Will decided that, whatever it would take, he would live by Hannibal's side. No matter the cost. After all, he had nothing to lose now, except for himself.
And he found himself only when he was with the cannibal.

Hannibal, on his part, interpreted the sigh as Will being tired once again. He quickly finished dressing the wound on his collarbone, satisfied by the aspects of both cuts into the man's skin.

The pinkness had slightly reduced and a fine membrane had taken over the sewing, the skin closing more and more by each passing moments. Once done, he put away the supplies in the adjacent bathroom and then sat back in his chair.

With a smile, he reached for the book that Will had let fall on the bed covers. It was about rare butterflies species, their biology and transformation from caterpillars to the beautiful flying being that they were.
How fitting.
Leaning comfortably back, he started reading.

While he did not understand what was said to him, Will could still appreciate the tone and rhythm of Hannibal voice, slowly lulling him to sleep.
After a chapter, Hannibal glanced back up at the laying man, only to find him fully asleep. He closed the book and put it back on the bedsides table. He gently swept curls from Will's forehead then went and left the room, closing the door behind him.

To be continued.

Chapter End Notes

Hello again my dear Peeps!
So, how was it, did jou enjoy it? Let me know!

This chapter was really peculiar to write for me. I had a blank page syndrom for most of the week thehn BAM it all came to me at once, resulting in me writing it a all in a sitting and a half. Haha.
I must admit I might have distracted myself with reading other's fics to overcome my lack of words but he just postpone my own writing in the end, so captivated I was... Oopsie?

But I had fun writing this so it's the most important thing, right? That and you enjoying it, of course!

Anyways, thanks for reading this chapter. And a big, huge, thanks to those who left comments, kudos, or suscribe to this fic!

I'll start writing the next chapter soon, but I would love ot hear if you have some ideas about what will happen next my lovely Peeps! More angst? Less? More french - speaking Hannibal? (I sure would enjoy that haha)

Until then, take care of you!
I love y'all!

- Bribritenma

End Notes

Hi again Peeps!
Thanks for reading this!
I hope you enjoyed it!
Thanks to all of those who left kudos, commented or subscribed! It means a lot to me!

I’m looking for a nice beta-reader, mostly to help me overcome the language barrier and the grammatical difficulties coming along with it, if you want to help please contact me!!

This fic is not over yet so you will hear from me quite soon!

Until then, take care of yourselves my dear Peeps!
-Bribritenma

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!